

MEXICAN WOLF BLUE RANGE REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

DECISION ON TRANSLOCATION OF M1008 AND F1028

May 28, 2008

DECISION OF LEAD AGENCY DIRECTORS

On May 28, 2008, jurisdictional Lead Agency Director Bruce C. Thompson (NMDGF) affirmed via email to AMOC Chair Terry B. Johnson that the Directors of the six Lead Agencies participating in the Reintroduction Project (i.e. AGFD, NMDGF, USDA-APHIS WS, USFS, USFWS, and WMAT), after reflecting on the information below, by unanimous consent authorize implementation of the AMOC recommendation to translocate adult Mexican wolves M1008 and F1028 to (a) McKenna Park NM, or, depending on wild wolf pack movements at the time of translocation, (b) Gila Flat NM at an appropriate time in 2008.

OVERVIEW

Immediately below is the Reintroduction Project's Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) recommendation, which is followed by the Interagency Field Team (IFT) recommendation that AMOC considered. Subsequent sections provide information relevant to how and why these recommendations were made.

AMOC RECOMMENDATION

On May 20, 2008, AMOC agreed via conference call to recommend Lead Agency Directors approval of the IFT's recommendation (see below) to translocate adult Mexican wolves M1008 and F1028 to (a) McKenna Park NM, or, depending on wild wolf pack movements at the time of translocation, (b) Gila Flat NM. All six AMOC Lead Agency Representatives voted in favor of this recommendation: AGFD, NMDGF, USDA-APHIS WS, USFS, USFWS, and WMAT. The following Signatory Cooperators concurred with the AMOC recommendation: Greenlee County AZ (also representing Graham and Navajo counties AZ). No other cooperating agencies participated in the May 20 conference call.

IFT RECOMMENDATION

The Interagency Field Team (IFT) recommends that adult Mexican wolves M1008 and F1028 be translocated as a pair from the Sevilleta Mexican Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico to McKenna Park NM, Gila Flat NM, Miller Springs NM, or Home Creek AZ (the sites are listed in priority order). Movements of free-ranging wolf packs at the time of translocation will determine whether McKenna Park or Gila Flat is used. The Miller Springs NM and Home Creek AZ sites are secondary recommendations, in that order.

This translocation is necessary to further genetic diversity and growth of the wild population, which consisted of 52 collared and known uncollared wolves and an unknown number of other wolves at the end of 2007. Both M1008 and F1028 have prior experience in the wild (see below), thus they qualify for translocation. Neither wolf has a depredation incident counted against it. A

January 2006 depredation incident assigned to M1008 has been dropped, in accordance with SOP 13.0, Exception 3, since it occurred more than 365 days ago (see M1008 discussion below).

All four recommended translocation sites are on National Forest lands within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA). McKenna Park NM and Miller Springs NM were approved as translocation sites in 2000. Home Creek AZ and Gila Flat NM were approved as translocation sites in 2005 and 2006, respectively. USFS and USFWS completed NEPA compliance for each site as it was approved for translocation.

If the Project's six Lead Agency Directors approve the AMOC recommendation, translocation will occur in mid June to July 2008, in compliance with Project SOP 6.0: Translocation of Mexican Wolves (and the approved Clarification Memo for SOP 6.0).

PROCESS BACKGROUND

AMOC and the Lead Agency Directors considered previous versions of this recommendation in December 2007 and April 2008. In those versions, the IFT recommended translocating M1008 and F1028 into Home Creek AZ; McKenna Park NM and Gila Flat NM were among the alternate sites identified. The Home Creek recommendation was partially predicated on the belief that M1008 and F1028 would pair and mate in captivity, and F1028 would be pregnant when translocated. Project results to date suggest that late-stage pregnancy helps tie adult pairs to translocation sites, thus potentially reducing the need for intensive post-translocation wolf management.

Although M1008 and F1028 mated in captivity during the 2008 breeding season, pregnancy testing in late April 2008 determined that F1028 was not pregnant. This caused the IFT to change its translocation recommendation for the pair to McKenna Park as the primary preferred alternative, with Gila Flat as the secondary preferred alternative. Although McKenna Park is superior in terms of prey base and isolation, both sites have a relatively low risk of post-translocation territorial conflict because extant wild wolf packs are not using them at this time. Mid-June to July is the recommended translocation period, because elk calves will be more readily available then.

Process Steps Completed

1. November 2007: IFT proposal completed through discussion with AMOC.
2. December 3, 2007: public meeting in Alpine AZ. See Appendix 1 for details.
3. December 12, 2007: AMOC discussion and endorsement.
4. December 13, 2007: discussion in Directors Summit Meeting; IFT directed to clarify information on permittee livestock operations in Home Creek area and permittee preferences on timing of translocation.
5. January-March 2008: IFT completed coordination with USFS and potentially affected permittees, and integrated relevant information into proposal. See Appendix 2 for a summary of these discussions.
6. April 8, 2008: AMOC forwards revised proposal for Home Creek translocation to Lead Agency Directors, with request for decision by close of business on April 9, 2008.
7. April 9, 2008: USFWS informs IFT and AMOC that F1028 is not pregnant, thus nullifying the justification for translocation into Home Creek AZ.

8. April 10, 2008: IFT recommends that translocation be delayed until June 2008. AMOC asks IFT to bring a revised recommendation that reflects all current information, issues, and alternatives to the AMOC April 22-23 meeting.
9. April 23, 2008: IFT recommends to AMOC that M1008 and F1028 be translocated to McKenna Park NM in June. After extensive discussion, AMOC directs IFT to re-edit proposal to address substantive and editorial issues, for reconsideration by AMOC in May 20 conference call.
10. May 20, 2008: AMOC conference call results in Lead Agency consensus endorsement of IFT recommendation for translocation of M1008 and F1028 into McKenna Park NM in June 2008 (or Gila Flat NM in June or July 2008), but IFT is again asked to re-edit its proposal to correct errors in writing and format, before providing final copy to AMOC Chair.
11. May 21-22, 2008: AMOC Chair and USFWS FPC revise IFT proposal (with input from Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator, to resolve all editorial and content issues.
12. May 23, 2008: AMOC Chair disseminates endorsed recommendation to Lead Agency Directors for their consideration, with a decision required by close of business on Thursday, May 29, 2008. Note: the NMDGF Director may opt to require a public meeting in NM prior to making a decision on the proposed translocation.

Process Steps Remaining

1. The Director of the Lead agency of jurisdiction (NMDGF) will notify the AMOC Chair that the proposed translocation has been approved or disapproved.
2. The AMOC Chair must then notify AMOC, cooperating agencies, and the IFT that the proposed translocation has been approved or disapproved
3. If the translocation has been approved:
 - a. The IFT shall notify (by phone, email, or personal visit) local permittees (i.e. those within 10 mi of the approved translocation site), a voluntary livestock industry contact for New Mexico, local county officials, and local District Rangers before the translocation occurs.
 - b. Prior to translocation, the IFT must place a mesh “modified soft release” pen at the translocation site and establish “pen sitters” in a camp sufficiently close to the site to monitor the pen and the wolves.
 - c. The translocation will occur on or about June 10, 2008 (or as late as July 2008), per the AMOC and IFT recommendations.
 - d. The Lead Agencies shall collaborate in issuing a general news release, with copies to the county government of the county in which the translocation will occur, within seven calendar days following the translocation.

INTERAGENCY FIELD TEAM PROPOSAL

Summary

The IFT recommends that AMOC endorse its request for authorization to translocate two Mexican wolves (M1008 and F1028) into the BRWRA. Per the October 2003 Memorandum of Understanding under which the Project operates, this proposal was developed by the USFWS Field Projects Coordinator and discussed with and endorsed by the AGFD, NMDGF, and WMAT IFT Leaders and the IFT lead for USDA-APHIS WS. The USFS does not have IFT

representation at this time, but this proposal was discussed with USFS staff on the Apache and Gila National Forests as it was developed.

Project Population Goals and Strategies

The Reintroduction Project's population goals for 2008 are:

1. at least 10 percent growth in the wild population (i.e. from 52 to at least 57 radio-collared and known uncollared wolves);
2. at least 50 percent growth in the number of wild breeding pairs (i.e. from 4 to at least 6); and
3. enhance the genetics of the wild population (no quantitative objective has been set).

Strategies used to attain these goals include promoting natural growth of the wild population through increased survival of adult and sub-adult wolves and pups born in the wild in 2008, and using initial releases and translocations to increase the number of adult pairs in the wild and to infuse under-represented genes into the wild population and reduce the mean kinship value for the radio-collared wild population.

Progress toward these goals will be measured through the 2008 end-of-year count.

Current Need

The 2007 end-of-year count totaled 52 free-ranging Mexican wolves in Arizona and New Mexico (i.e. 20 radio-collared and 32 known uncollared animals). The total number of free-ranging wolves that do not have radio-collars or which have non-functioning radio-collars is not known and cannot be known. However, the available data strongly suggest that the total number of wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico is substantially less than the long-term population goal of at least 100 wolves in the BRWRA. It is also less than, although statistically not distinguishable from, the 2006 end-of-year count (i.e. 59 radio-collared and known uncollared individuals).

Four breeding pairs of Mexican wolves (i.e. Bluestem, Middle Fork, Paradise, and Rim packs) were documented in the 2007 end-of-year count. This was below the long-term Project goal of at least 10 pairs, and below the seven breeding pairs documented in the 2006 end-of-year count.

Genetic diversity of Mexican wolves in the BRWRA is thought to be lower than is desired, based on available information for mean kinship values. Mean kinship value is an index of relatedness; lower values indicate less relatedness, which is the desirable trait. Calculation of mean kinship values requires analysis of blood samples, which are only available from wolves that have been handled (i.e. born in captivity, or captured in the wild). Thus, the actual mean kinship value of the wild population cannot be calculated. However, the mean kinship value for the collared Mexican wolves known to be present in the BRWRA in September 2007 was 0.2134, compared to 0.1695 for all captive Mexican wolves (ca. 350 animals) that were listed in the USFWS-approved Species Survival Plan as of July 2007.

History of M1008 and F1028

M1008. On January 18, 2006, IFT personnel from USDA-APHIS WS confirmed a wolf depredation on livestock just northwest of the Luna Pack territory in the north-central Gila National Forest NM. The depredation incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf or wolves. The IFT set traps and on January 19 captured an uncollared juvenile male wolf. The wolf was fitted with a radio-collar, assigned studbook number m1008, and released at the capture site.

For several days, m1008 remained in the vicinity of its capture. It was observed there with an uncollared wolf of unknown sex on January 20, 2006. However, throughout February and March 2006, the IFT documented m1008 traveling widely and alone. On February 25, 2006, m1008 was recorded in the area of another possible cattle depredation in New Mexico. The depredation was not confirmed as a wolf kill, so it was not counted as a depredation incident.

On March 26, 2006 a coyote trapper captured m1008 in a foothold trap on private land, near Buck Pass NM, just outside the BRWRA boundary (see Fig. 1). That same day, m1008 was removed from the foothold trap and transported to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility, in New Mexico.

F1028. This wolf was released into the wild on June 6, 2006, as an uncollared member of the Meridian Pack (AM806, AF838, fp1028, mp1029). It was not radio-collared because it was too small. The initial release occurred near Middle Mountain AZ (Apache National Forest). Over the next few months, members of the Meridian Pack were repeatedly observed around residences in Beaverhead AZ. The IFT implemented hazing actions to modify the pack's behavior. fp1028 became a lone animal in mid October, after AF838 died in September and AM806 moved out of the Meridian Pack territory.

On several occasions in October 2006, the IFT observed a single uncollared wolf in the old Meridian Pack territory. This animal was believed to be fp1028. On October 20, trapping was initiated. On October 25, fp1028 was caught and fitted with a radio-collar. During the remainder of 2006, fp1028 traveled alone, using the former Meridian Pack territory and making long distance movements north of Alpine AZ.

During May 2007, the IFT located f1028 in the northern portion of the Apache National Forest, just south of the Hawks Nest Pack's home range. On May 23 and May 28, 2007, the IFT observed f1028 near Alpine AZ, with a rear leg injury. The IFT conducted intensive monitoring to assess the injury, and hazing to limit potential residential conflicts.

During the last week of June 2007, the IFT began trapping to remove f1028 because of nuisance behavior. f1028 had killed one domestic duck in Nutrioso AZ and two, possibly three, in Alpine AZ. Domestic ducks are not considered livestock under AZ law, thus under the 10j Rule and SOP 13.0 such losses are not considered depredation. Regardless, on June 28, the IFT captured f1028 north of Alpine (see Fig. 1) and transported it to a veterinarian, who treated the foot and predicted the leg would recover to weight-bearing strength. On July 30, 2007, the IFT transported f1028 from the Project veterinarian's office in Arizona to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico, and placed it in captivity with M1008.

Rationale for Translocation of M1008 and F1028

M1008 and F1028 are adult Mexican wolves with wild experience in New Mexico. Both were removed from the wild for subsequent translocation. They were placed together in captivity on June 28, 2007, and subsequently bonded. They mated in their first breeding season together (i.e. the spring of 2008). The mating did not produce pregnancy, but this is not unusual for wolves that are mating for the first time. Their mean kinship is 0.1386; neither animal was included in the September 2007 mean kinship calculation referenced above. Translocating these wolves as a pair would immediately increase the known radio-collared wild population, enhance the likelihood of adding a wild breeding pair in 2009, and probably reduce overall mean kinship for the radio-collared wild population. In addition, F1028 has genes that are not represented in the wild population. Hence, offspring from pairing F1028 with any male would enhance genetic diversity of the wild population.

Neither M1008 nor F1028 has a depredation incident counting against it at this time. M1008 was taken into captivity on March 6, 2006, as a wild-born juvenile (m1008). Thus, a January 18, 2006 depredation incident assigned to m1008 has lapsed, in accordance with Exception 3 of Project SOP 13.0:

3. *Wolves known or likely to have committed three depredation incidents within a period of 365 days shall be permanently removed from the wild as expeditiously as possible (i.e. “3 strikes and out;” see Procedures, Section 3.g.iii). Conversely, a wolf that has committed or been involved in fewer than three depredation incidents will, if 365 days have passed since the last incident, be considered a “new” wolf, with no “strikes” against it.*

Release Method

A modified soft release is proposed for this translocation, to increase the probability of the wolves remaining in the translocation area. In this method, wolves are held in a mesh enclosure until they either self-release by tearing through the mesh or are released by the IFT after a brief acclimation period (i.e. up to 2 weeks).

Translocation Sites Considered

The IFT considered four sites for this translocation: McKenna Park NM, Gila Flat NM, Miller Springs NM, and Home Creek AZ (see Fig. 1). All four sites are biologically appropriate for summer translocation(s). McKenna Park NM and Miller Springs NM were approved as translocation sites in 2000. Home Creek AZ and Gila Flat NM were approved as translocation sites in 2005 and 2006, respectively. USFS and USFWS completed NEPA compliance for each site as it was approved for translocation.

McKenna Park NM: This site is in Catron County, southeast of the junction of the West Fork of the Gila River and White Creek, in the Gila Wilderness on the Gila National Forest. It is an approved translocation site and is eligible for immediate translocations, in accordance with SOP 6.0 Exceptions 1a, 1b, and 1c: *areas that were previously approved for an initial release or translocation, and areas that are currently or were previously occupied by an established pack or elements of an established pack.* This area is farther from a developed road than any other

point in New Mexico. The area supports moderate numbers of elk and deer from spring through fall. Elk sightings and sign have increased since the area burned in the summer of 2003; elk calving peaks in mid-June in this area. No wolves are known to be using this area (although the Middle Fork Pack has occurred nearby), and no livestock are present. Wolves leave the area in winter, due to lack of elk and deer in that season. Several packs of wolves have been translocated to this site, including: Luna (AM583 and AF562 in 2002), Saddle (AF797, AM732, mp860, fp861, fp862, mp863, and mp864 in 2004), San Mateo (AM796 and AF903 in 2004), Ring (AM729 and AF799 in 2005), and Aspen (AM512, AF667, m871, mp973, mp974, and fp975 in 2005). Most dispersed from the area relatively quickly, but several packs persisted and reproduced elsewhere. The Luna Pack remains in the wild and produced pups in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. It is the most stable and consistently reproducing pack in New Mexico, but on May 13, 2008 AM583 was found dead (the case is under investigation). Additionally, wolves from the Saddle (AF797, AM732, fp861) and Aspen (AM512, AF667, and m871) packs that were translocated to McKenna Park dispersed and produced pups (m871 and f861) elsewhere that are still in the wild. Other translocations to this site were not considered successful because the wolves did not breed and reproduce in the wild (mp863, mp864, AM796, AF903, AM729, F799, and mp973). Four other wolves from this site are currently considered fate unknown (mp860, fp862, mp974, fp975). The Luna, Saddle, Ring, and Aspen packs all had varying numbers of depredation incidents following translocation; AF667, AF797, AM732, mp863, mp864, and AM729 were eventually removed from the wild due to depredation. The overall translocation success of known-fate wolves at this translocation site is 53% (n = 15).

Gila Flat NM: This site is in Grant County, in the Wilderness Ranger District of the Gila National Forest. It is an approved translocation site and is eligible for immediate translocations, in accordance with SOP 6.0 Exception 1a: *areas that were previously approved for an initial release or translocation*. At approximately 7600 ft elevation, it is predominantly ponderosa pine forest, with some pinyon-juniper habitat. Elk and deer occur at moderate densities within the area, relative to the Gila National Forest as a whole. Gila Flat is part of the Sapillo Allotment, which currently does not carry a permit for livestock. Other grazing allotments are more than five miles away. There are no occupied residences within five miles of the site, nor any known wolves in the area. The area has seasonally moderate traffic use, due to visitors to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The Gila Flat area is currently unoccupied by known wolves (collared or uncollared). However, the Middle Fork Pack occasionally uses areas to the north. M1039 was translocated to this site in the winter of 2008, but it quickly dispersed outside the BRWRA boundary for a second time and was recaptured.

Miller Springs NM: This area is in Grant County, approximately 17 miles south of the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument in the Gila National Forest Wilderness Ranger District. It is an approved translocation site and is eligible for immediate translocations, in accordance with SOP 6.0 Exceptions 1a and 1c: *areas that were previously approved for an initial release or translocation, and areas that were previously occupied by an established pack or elements of an established pack*. The area supports moderate numbers of elk and deer throughout the year. Trespass wild cattle are present. This area is currently unoccupied by known (collared or uncollared) wolves. However, the Middle Fork Pack occasionally uses areas north of Miller Springs. Three previous translocations have occurred at the Miller Springs site (i.e. the Sycamore and Francisco packs in 2003 and the Durango Pack in 2007). Within two months of translocation, the Sycamore Pack (AF592 and AM648) was removed due to depredation and

nuisance issues. The Francisco Pack (AM509, AF511, m798, f799, f800, and m801) was translocated to this site in 2003; AF511, f799, and m798 all bred in the wild. AF511 and m798 also produced pups in the wild that survived. M801 and AM509 were struck and killed by vehicles, and F800 was illegally shot. In separate control actions, AF511 and F799 were removed for cattle depredations. In 2007, the Durango Pack (AF924 and AM973) was translocated to this site. AF924 was removed for depredations in July 2007. AM973 and a pup documented with AM973 disappeared in November 2007 and are currently considered fate unknown. None of the wolves translocated to Miller Springs have remained in the area; all have instead traveled north, passing through other wolf territories. The overall release success at this translocation site for known-fate wolves is 22% ($n = 9$).

Home Creek AZ: This area is in the Black River drainage, Apache County, in the Springerville Ranger District of the Apache National Forest. It is an approved translocation site and is eligible for immediate translocations, in accordance with SOP 6.0 Exceptions 1a, 1b, and 1c: *areas that were previously approved for an initial release or translocation, and areas that are currently or were previously occupied by an established pack or elements of an established pack*. As of May 2008, no packs are established in this area, although Hawks Nest and Bluestem occasionally visit areas near the Home Creek site. Of the four sites considered, this site is farthest from the confirmed depredation incident in which M1008 was involved in January 2006. It is in an area that supports sufficient prey year-round, and has only seasonal livestock use. Two previous translocations at the Home Creek site were successful, resulting in adult wolves that produced pups in the wild (i.e. AM863 in 2007; and San Mateo Pack, which consisted of AM796, AF903, mp927, mp928, and fp929, in 2005). AM796 and AM863 were removed from the wild in the winter of 2007 and the fall of 2007, respectively, because of multiple depredation incidents. The San Mateo alpha female (AF903) still persists in the wild, but AM863 was found dead on May 13, 2008. Two of the pups that were translocated with the San Mateo Pack were considered fate unknown, but were known to have survived until December 31, 2005. Thus, this translocation site has a rate of success (i.e. wolves that breed and produce pups in the wild) for known-fate wolves of 100% ($n = 3$).

Recommended Alternatives

Alternative 1: Translocate M1008 and F1028 to McKenna Park NM or Gila Flat NM in mid-June 2008, using a modified soft release methodology consistent with SOP 6.0. The final translocation site would be selected by the IFT on the basis of wolf pack locations at the time of translocation. As this document is being revised (May 22-23), the Middle Fork Pack has localized in a denning area away from the McKenna Park site. McKenna Park is superior to Gila Flat in terms of wild ungulate prey base (primarily elk), and is superior to both sites listed in Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: Translocate M1008 and F1028 to Miller Springs NM in June or July 2008 or to Home Creek AZ in mid-July 2008, using a modified soft release methodology consistent with SOP 6.0. The final translocation site would be selected by the IFT on the basis of wolf pack locations at the time of translocation. As this document is being revised (May 22-23), the Middle Fork Pack has localized in a denning area away from the Miller Springs site and the Hawks Nest and Bluestem packs are active near the Home Creek site. Livestock grazing rotations are the basis for deferring translocation at Home Creek to mid-July.

Alternatives Not Recommended

Alternative 1: Translocate M1008 and F1028 to the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). This alternative is not viable because WMAT does not favor additional translocations or initial releases until more information is available about the current FAIR wolf population.

Alternative 2: Retain M1008 and F1028 in captivity. If not translocated this year, M1008 and F1028 would likely remain in captivity and be proposed for translocation in a subsequent year. Unoccupied territories in the SRZ that are not filled by this pair or other wolves would likely be suggested as potential translocation sites for wolves that are involved in depredation or other incidents during the remainder of 2008. However, this alternative is not recommended because of the immediate need to increase the wild population and potentially contribute to increasing the number of breeding pairs in the wild in 2009.

Alternative 3: In addition to translocation of M1008 and F1028, translocate M921 and M922 into one of the New Mexico sites not chosen for the M1008-F1028 translocation. M921 and M922 were removed from the wild at 6 weeks of age. Single wolves translocated from captivity that have limited wild experience tend to be at greater risk of mortality, have a higher potential for nuisance behavior, and possibly tend to be less secretive (hence they are more visible to humans) than wolves with more extensive wild experience. Also, experience to date in the BRWRA suggests that wolves with limited wild experience exhibit less nuisance/problem behavior when they are anchored to a translocation area with a mate and/or by supplemental feeding. Conversely, the need exists to experiment with releasing single wolves of different ages and experience levels into novel situations to generate data refuting or affirming these concerns. However, given that M921 and M922 are eligible for translocation into the SRZ, they have additional value in terms of pairing with females that were wild born or which have substantial wild experience. After considering the factors noted above, the IFT does not recommend translocation of M921 and M922 at this time.

Expected Post Translocation Behavior

M1008 and F1028 are not expected to localize their movements after self-release, because F1028 is not pregnant and the pair will not be raising pups. However, the recommended areas (especially the McKenna Park site) all have sufficient prey base to support the pair, and reasonable ground and/or temporal distance from active livestock grazing and human habitation. Although there is never certainty when predicting post-translocation wolf behavior, there is good reason to believe the pair will remain in the translocation area at least long enough to re-adapt to wild existence.

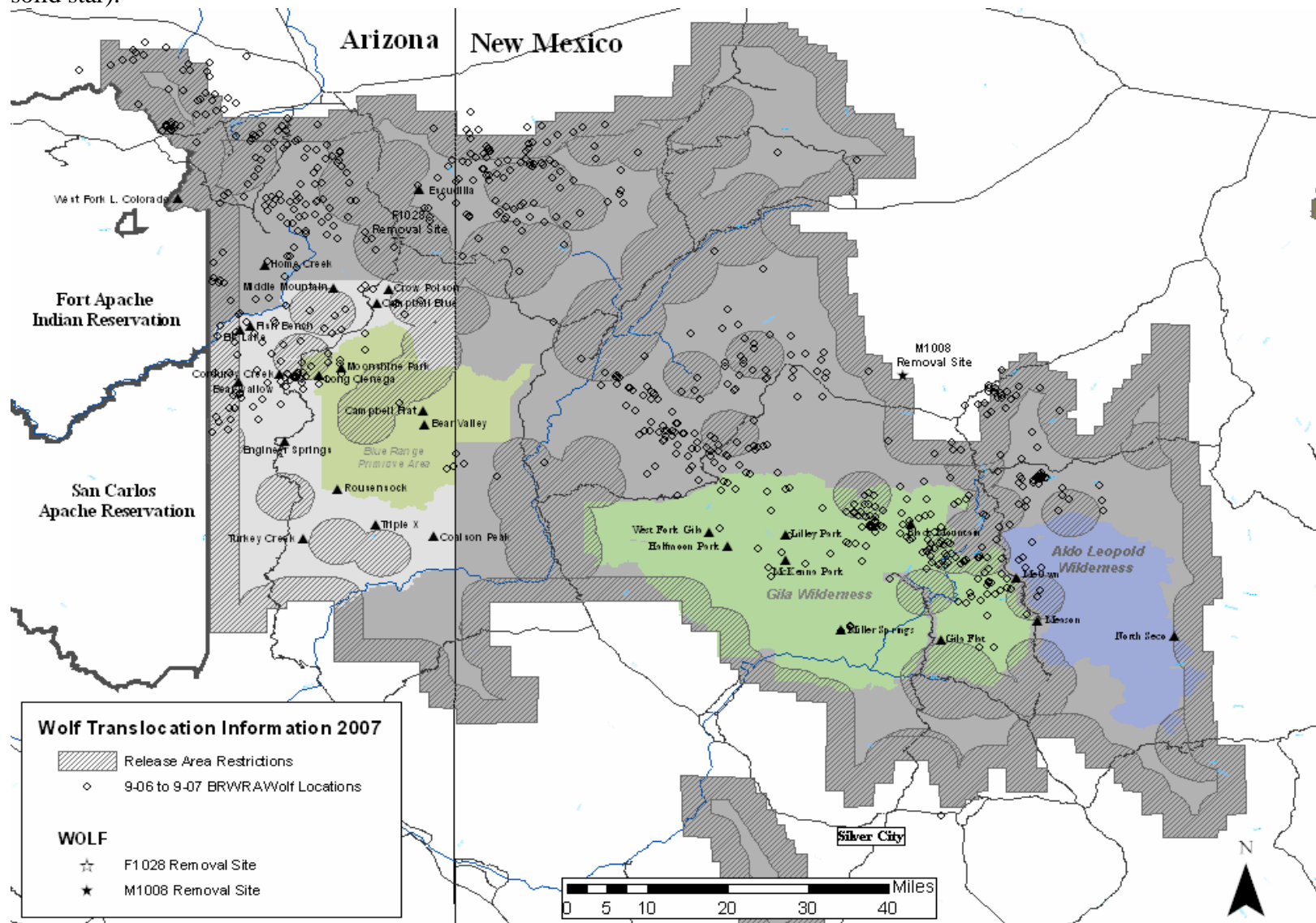
Public Comment

The IFT solicited public comment on the proposed translocation in conjunction with a public meeting in Alpine AZ on December 3, 2007. At that time, the translocation was recommended for Home Creek, on the Apache National Forest AZ. Public comment was predominantly negative, and no suggestions were offered for a different time or location that would make the translocation acceptable. However, IFT discussions with the National Forest grazing permittee

most likely to be affected by translocation at Home Creek were constructive. See Appendixes 1 and 2 for summaries of comment from the public meeting and discussion with the permittee.

As this document was being revised (April-May 2008), NMDGF AMOC and IFT representatives indicated that public comment would not be solicited, nor would a public meeting be held in NM, on possible translocation of M1008 and F1028 into the McKenna Park NM area, because the site was vetted with the public and the Gila National Forest when it was approved in 2000 as a wolf translocation site.

Figure 1. Wolf translocation sites (black solid triangles) within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area relative to wolf locations during September 2006 – September 2007 (open black circles) and removal sites of wolf F1028 (open black star) and wolf M1008 (black solid star).



Appendix 1

Summary of Public Meeting Regarding Proposed Home Creek Translocation December 3, 2007; Alpine, AZ

Eight members of the public present: Barbara Marks, Blue AZ; Tom Macnab, Blue AZ; Sam and Julia Luce, Blue AZ; Zeno Kiehne (editor of The Messenger newspaper) and son Keno Kiehne, Reserve NM; and Rick DaValos and John Meyer (area of Alpine AZ).

Three AGFD IFT members present: Shannon Barber-Meyer, Field Team Leader; Colby Gardner, Wildlife Specialist I; and Shawna Nelson, Outreach Technician.

Summary of verbal comments to give a general feel for the meeting:

Overwhelmingly, participants felt that these meetings are a waste of time and that they are “meeting-ed out.” They do not understand why we keep having public meetings because in their view they have provided comments in the past with no action or response by the agencies. Additionally, several participants said the wolf project is a conspiracy designed to end the ranching way of life and to get ranchers and their cattle to move off public land. Several participants felt that others who come to the larger public meetings “hate the ranchers.”

Barbara Marks, a local permittee, was concerned about the translocation because her cattle might be using at least a part of the allotment that is near Home Creek during that time. She also said that she felt bad, though, that the same situation might happen for others in New Mexico if the wolves were translocated there, because she wasn’t sure who was running livestock in which areas. Shannon Barber-Meyer spoke with Barbara about the possibility that she might be interested in working with the Forest Service like the Pedersens did this year to rotate their grazing to minimize wolf exposure. Shannon indicated that Defenders of Wildlife was able to pay the Pedersens for their expenses for hauling water because they rotated their stock to an area with less water. Barbara indicated that she felt that Defenders of Wildlife would likely not help her, because of past experiences, if she needed reimbursement for moving her cattle to decrease wolf exposure. Barbara said that she was very pleased with the program that AGFD had enacted to provide money for feed, etc. for ranchers impacted by wolves.

Summary of three written comments received:

1. A permittee, Barbara Marks, opposed translocation to Home Creek because it is part of their allotment and they will have livestock on it during the time for which translocation is being proposed. Also expressed concerns about the New Mexico sites, if there will be livestock calving within 10 miles of them. Also indicated that using an alternative pasture would not be economically feasible for them.
2. Two comments from Blue residents, Tom Macnab and Julia Luce, generally opposing the Reintroduction Project and hostile to Defenders of Wildlife and NMDGF.

Appendix 2

Summary of Permittee Meeting Regarding Proposed Home Creek Translocation March 19, 2008 Alpine, AZ

Mike Sumner (AGFD IFTL) and John Oakleaf (USFWS FPC) met with Rick DaValos (USFS), the primary permittee in the area, and a third individual on March 19, 2008 to discuss the proposed Home Creek translocation. The permittee is scheduled to bring approximately 110 head of cattle onto the north portion of the allotment in which the translocation would occur. The cattle would be there from May 15 until mid July, provided there are no "blow ups." The permittee said another permittee will have approximately 35 head on the southern end from July through the end of summer. Several options were discussed, including use of alternate pastures, leasing private pastures, "range riders," etc. The main thoughts expressed were as follows:

1. Permittee: wished we had done this last year, when he was resting this pasture, but realizes it would likely impact someone no matter what.
2. Permittee: he is calving now but expects there to be some "small" calves and "heavy" cows when he moves the herd onto the allotment. (Potential to move just these animals to other areas?)
3. Permittee: what are the chances of Bluestem or other packs denning nearby? Oakleaf: not likely, but possible. Where Bluestem dens might also impact alternate pasture site near Beaver Creek/26 Rd.
4. Davalos: offered fence maintenance assistance on alternate Little Creek and Hulsey Bench pastures. Oakleaf offered assistance from Reintroduction Project personnel and asked DaValos if fire crews might be available to help as well. Davalos: Possibly.
5. Permittee: if things really go south and he has to move the whole herd to avoid wolves, he will have the cost of fuel for moving the cows elsewhere and/or the cost of leasing private pasture, which is about \$5-\$12/AUM. Oakleaf said that he could probably come up with about \$2000 to help with private leases, etc. if it came to that.

The permittee was very receptive to the range rider idea. Oakleaf said that two nongovernmental organizations had money for this and might be willing to fund up to \$2000/month for two months for a rider. The permittee said he didn't have anyone in mind, but he would start looking. He might have to find a retired guy for that amount.

The permittee said he could split his herd into smaller groups and use smaller pastures, if need be, but he would rather not do this as he will be using the smaller pastures again (perhaps later in the year). He asked if he might put up to 10 head in the AGFD pasture at PS Ranch, since he thought AGFD might need to treat or burn that pasture. He also asked if a range rider could use the PS cabin. Sumner: the cabin is often used by AGFD personnel during the summer, but he would forward the requests for that and for pasture use.

The permittee summed things up by saying that he was comfortable going forward, given the proposed options and that we'd see how it goes. He expressed his thanks for our willingness to work with him. He also spoke highly of the stewardship agreement funding from AGFD that was worked out previously. The third individual also said that he was greatly impressed with the way the meeting went, especially the willingness to discuss options with "give and take," and the lack of "table pounding" demands.